



Southeastern Idaho News

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA & POWER COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Job growth showed very little change from May to June in the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area. The service sector was unchanged from May. The modest increase of 150 jobs split between construction and food manufacturing salvaged just a fractional increase in total nonfarm employment for the Bannock-Power County area. The most dramatic development was the seasonal loss of 710 jobs in public education as the school year ended and the offsetting increase of 740 jobs in general government as the summer recreation season kicked off. While it's unlikely that all the teachers took jobs in the parks and forests, there undoubtedly are some educators working in positions with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, summer recreation staffs and highway districts.

Year-to-year, the metropolitan area has seen a nearly 5 percent increase in non-farm jobs, about 1,900, primarily in the service sector. Professional and business services saw an increase of 450 jobs with more small businesses opening and higher employment levels in call centers. Public education posted the largest gain from a year ago, probably because of reductions in class size to comply with the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind law and more class offerings at Idaho State University.

JOB FORECASTING

In last month's southeastern Idaho news, the special topic was on maintaining a work force, emphasizing the importance of education or specialized training to maintain a pool of skilled, qualified workers. The Idaho Department of Labor's Web site, imi.idaho.gov, forecasts jobs throughout Idaho and in each region of the state. The site includes lists of current jobs and their average wage, the highest paying jobs and the jobs in highest demand. These forecasts take into account business cycles and a variety of independent variables such as time, population, value of the dollar, specific occupational staffing patterns and current work force numbers. Each specific occupation has its own statistical model.

Southeastern Idaho Table 1: Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment
Bannock and Power counties

	Jun 2007*	May 2007	Jun 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	45,500	44,510	44,550	2.2	2.1
Unemployment	1,120	1,060	1,570	5.7	-28.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.5	2.4	3.5		
Total Employment	44,380	43,450	42,980	2.1	3.3
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	44,870	44,620	43,780	0.6	2.5
Unemployment	1,000	820	1,440	22.0	-30.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.2	1.8	3.3		
Total Employment	43,870	43,800	42,340	0.2	3.6
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	40,430	40,280	38,530	0.4	4.9
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	6,060	5,910	5,880	2.5	3.1
Natural Resources & Mining	30	30	30	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,100	2,030	2,110	3.4	-0.5
Manufacturing	3,930	3,850	3,740	2.1	5.1
Food Manufacturing	1,320	1,250	1,160	5.6	13.8
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	170	180	170	-5.6	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	270	270	260	0.0	3.8
Other Manufacturing	2,170	2,150	2,150	0.9	0.9
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	34,370	34,370	32,650	0.0	5.3
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,460	7,490	7,470	-0.4	-0.1
Wholesale Trade	1,350	1,360	1,360	-0.7	-0.7
Retail Trade	4,760	4,770	4,610	-0.2	3.3
Utilities	50	50	50	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,300	1,310	1,450	-0.8	-10.3
Information	700	700	710	0.0	-1.4
Financial Activities	2,270	2,260	2,090	0.4	8.6
Professional & Business Services	5,790	5,850	5,340	-1.0	8.4
Educational & Health Services	3,390	3,400	3,140	-0.3	8.0
Leisure & Hospitality	3,450	3,390	3,650	1.8	-5.5
Other Services	1,180	1,180	1,170	0.0	0.9
Government Education	5,100	5,810	4,420	-12.2	15.4
Government Administration	5,030	4,290	4,660	17.2	7.9

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Local regional labor economists can help interpret these forecasts and have other tools available to evaluate current job markets and forecasts.

The occupational forecasts can be very helpful in deciding which occupation to pursue, but a career decision should not be based only on job forecasts. Other factors should be considered such as mental aptitude, personal interest, required skills, personality preferences, working conditions and availability of education and training. The Internet can be helpful to a person making career and education decisions.

One such site is cis.idaho.gov. The Career Information System allows people to take surveys of their likes, dislikes, aptitudes and interests and

then compare those to occupations. Once individuals see occupations most likely to fit their personalities and abilities, this program can identify the education or training needed to work in those occupations. The site also provides additional information on curriculum needs, financial aid and scholarship availability. General information on this site is available at anytime on the Internet without a password or user ID. However, to get full access it may be necessary to contact a school counselor or Idaho Department of Labor staff. This information can be very useful for students in junior high as they look forward to preparing for high school. Older individuals already in the work force considering changing careers will also find the information useful.

AREA INTERESTS

- The economy throughout Idaho has been affected this summer by range and forest fires too numerous and quickly growing to count. Every county in southeastern Idaho has had a least one major fire requiring assistance from agencies outside the area. The fires create additional jobs for those involved in fighting and controlling them and pumps money into local economies where firefighters are stationed, as they buy food and supplies. There is a great deal of cost, too. The money spent to control fires is often reallocated from other projects or programs, leaving them unfunded or underfunded. There is the loss of range land, fuel consumption for aircraft and other fire-fighting equipment, reduced recreational opportunities, interruption of electrical and communications services and the nonproductive use of scarce water.
- The hot, dry weather has contributed to disrupting summertime activities as well, but it has not slowed the number of social, sporting and entertainment events in area communities. The activities all play a part in stimulating the local economies. In addition to many successful Fourth of July events, activities in July included concerts, dances, horseshoe tournaments, youth track meets, many sports camps, individual city celebrations, fishing contests, Pioneer Day activities and a POW/MIA rally that featured the Moving Wall Vietnam Memorial.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

BANNOCK COUNTY

- Renovation of the Whitman Hotel, built in 1913 in old town Pocatello, is proceeding as planned. Phase one and two are nearly completed. The final rebuilding phase is scheduled to begin this summer. When it is finished, the Whitman will house 26 low-to moderate-income apartments. Retail shops will be located on the main floor.
- Residents who like curly fries, jamocha shakes and hot roast beef sandwiches celebrated the opening of a second Arby's restaurant on Yellowstone Avenue in Chubbuck.

- Stirling Golf Co. held a week-long grand opening July 13-21. As the name implies, the business specializes in all types of golf equipment and accessories.
- Rosewood Reception Center and Gathering Place opened in July in Pocatello with two outdoor weddings. The business is owned by Chris Nelson to host events ranging from birthday parties and weddings to business conferences and Christmas parties.
- The Pocatello City Council is buying 90 acres needed for the long-awaited highway connector on the city's south side. The purchase price was \$358,000.

BEAR LAKE COUNTY

- The developers of Bear Mountain Resort presented a conceptual plan to the Bear Lake Planning and Zoning Commission prior to requesting the board to re-zone some property from agricultural to a Large Scale Planned Unit Development. The resort will have year-round activities, and there is concern that the development be environmentally friendly.
- Forty community leaders have identified jobs and job growth as their highest priority in promoting economic progress in the Bear Lake Valley. Affordable housing was also mentioned as a concern should property values rise with the increasing recreational popularity of the valley. The group is assessing the possibility of tying the value of housing units built with tax incentives or other public funds to the national inflation rate so they would not be affected by property value escalation at much higher rates. Consultant Rick Foster with Whisper Mountain indicated this is being done in some resort communities, but specific details were not available.
- Doug Johnson met with the Bear Lake Regional Commission about the proposed Reserve at Bear Lake, located on the north end of Fish Haven. The development will have lots ranging from 0.4 acre to more than seven acres. The development may be the first in the state where groundwater rights can be exchanged for water for culinary purposes. Johnson also intends to develop a system to use gray water from showers and baths for watering lawns and gardens.

BINGHAM COUNTY

- Bingham Memorial Hospital began construction of its planned three-story, 42,500-square-foot medical office building to accommodate the consolidation of physicians and their staffs. The facility will be connected to Bingham Memorial by an elevated walkway, which will allow the doctors to travel quickly between the facilities. The project should be completed by December 2008.
- Erin Peterson has opened Anytime Fitness in Blackfoot. The business offers state-of-the-art equipment, a full cardio theatre, treadmills, elliptical machines, free weights, bikes and tanning facilities along with private

showers and dressing facilities. The fitness center will be open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

- Ralph Thurston and Jeriann Sabin run the only cut flower operation in southern Idaho. The niche they found for their business was selling blooming cut flowers to high-end retailers in resorts such as Sun Valley and Jackson, Wyo. They found that they could compete with larger regional flower growing operations by being able to make quick delivery to clients, thereby providing the freshest flowers available.
- Bingham County signed a two-year, \$235,000 contract with ADAPCO, a vector control specialist company headquartered in Florida, to conduct the mosquito abatement program approved last month.

CARIBOU COUNTY

- Caribou County has been designated a drought emergency area by Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter. The declaration allows temporary changes in the point of diversion for water, the place and purpose of use. The declaration will also expedite changes to Conservation Reserve Program grassland use. Additionally, the disaster declaration allows low-interest loans through various federal farm programs.
- Soda Springs High School has been named the Idaho 2A School of Excellence. It earned this distinction for overall excellence in academic performance, athletic achievement and citizenship endeavors.
- A \$450,000 federal grant was awarded to the Chesterfield Foundation to rebuild structures in the ghost town. Preserving Chesterfield as a historical monument began in the early 1960s but did not gain real direction and commitment until the formation of the Chesterfield Foundation in 1979. Since then, several buildings have been refurbished and redecorated with furniture and in a décor popular during the time Chesterfield was a thriving community. The town was founded in 1881 as a Mormon settlement.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

- Franklin County's hometown radio station, KACH, has been operating as an AM station since 1948. This month the FCC gave approval to expand the coverage area and to operate on both the AM and FM bands. Expanded coverage was granted primarily because KACH is the county's Emergency Alert System and the signal had limited coverage at night. Local residents will most likely notice improved reception.
- Franklin County commissioners are evaluating a recycling program in the area that would either be curbside pick-up or a system using roll-off centers. It appears the curbside method would cost more per year, but because it is more effective there would be greater saving as a result of being able to extend the life of the current landfill.

- Irrigation water concerns became a reality for stockholders of Twin Lake Irrigation Co. when they received notices their allotments were being cut from 1.4 acre feet to 1.2 acre feet. There will be enough water to finish the second crop of hay, but farmers who want to cut a third crop of hay and also have other crops such as corn, beans or potatoes will have to make a choice of where they want water delivered because there will not be enough water to irrigate all the crops.

ONEIDA COUNTY

- ATC Communications now provides telephone, DSL, cable TV and Syringa Wireless service to the residents of the Malad area. The increased services required additional staff and space. The company held a grand opening for its expanded service offerings and refurbished office.
- Heidi Goddard opened Studio 20 Hair Designs in Malad. The new store will offer haircuts, colors, facials, perms and massage therapy by certified therapists, Kerri Larson and Audra Ivie.
- The third annual Welsh Festival was a big success, according to chairman Mike Williams. As many as 1,600 people saw the displays and attended the numerous Welsh-related activities. More than 700 people attended the afternoon Salmon Bake, and organizers have already begun planning next year's celebration.
- A 10-foot by 30-foot vinyl laminated sign next to Interstate 15 welcoming travelers to Malad was donated by former residents, Victor and Heather Hubbard, owners of The Sign Hub.

POWER COUNTY

- Ramesh Raman, president of Southeast Idaho Energy LLC, said an important factor in his decision to locate a proposed \$2 billion energy and agriculture center near American Falls was the leadership of Power County commissioners. The facility will be known as the Advanced Energy Center, and it will be built in two phases. Phase I involves installation of one gasifier to turn coal and petroleum coke into more than 4,000 tons of fertilizer and 58,800 gallons of diesel a day. Two more gasifiers will be added in Phase II to boost diesel output to 8,400 barrels a day. The company hopes to begin construction late next year.
- Citing the need to renovate the American Falls Intermediate School for safety and security as well as future growth, the American Falls School Board has set a \$6.8 million bond election for Aug. 30.

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